

Just the Facts, Please

Myth — *A female cat or dog should have a litter before she is spayed.*

Fact — The sooner you spay your female, the better her health will be in the future. As long as a kitten or puppy weighs more than two pounds and is two months old, he or she can be neutered or spayed. Many veterinarians are practicing perfectly safe early sterilization. The likelihood of developing mammary tumors or uterine infections increases the longer a female goes unsplayed. In fact, a female spayed before sexual maturity (six to nine months of age) has one-seventh the risk of an intact female of developing mammary cancer.

Myth — *Spaying or neutering (sterilization) will alter my pet's personality.*

Fact — Any slight changes will be positive. Regardless of the age when spayed or neutered, your pet will remain a caring, loving and protective companion. Neutering will reduce the need to breed, and that has a calming effect on many animals. Both neutered male canines and felines tend to stop roaming and fighting and lose the desire to mark their territory with urine.

Myth — *Companion animals will become fat and lazy if they are neutered.*

Fact — Absolutely not! Lack of exercise and overfeeding make pets fat and lazy—not neutering. Your pet will not gain weight if you provide exercise and monitor food intake. Neutering is good for your pet, since sterilized pets tend to live an average of two to three years longer than unsterilized pets.

Myth — *Sterilization is a dangerous and painful surgery for my pet.*

Fact — Spaying and neutering are the most common surgeries performed on animals. With a minimal amount of home care, your pet will resume normal behavior in a couple of days.

Myth — *Children should witness the miracle of birth.*

Fact — Countless books and videos are available to teach your children about birth in a responsible manner. Letting your pet produce offspring you have no intention of keeping is teaching your children irresponsibility. Anyone who has seen an animal euthanized in a shelter for lack of a home knows the truth behind this dangerous myth.

Many states and counties have established low-cost spay and neuter programs that make the surgery affordable. Residents who live in the unincorporated parts of San Bernardino County qualify for the **San Bernardino County** Animal Care & Control Program's Spay & Neuter Voucher Program. For more information please call the Pet Over Population Coalition's (POPCO's) toll free number at 1-877-44POPCO. Residents from other areas of San Bernardino are also encouraged to call POPCO's number to find out about other programs.

Many cities also offer reduced licensing fees for owners of spayed and neutered pets. If you live in San Bernardino County and own an unaltered dog the license fee is \$60.00 per year versus if your animal was spayed/neutered the cost is only \$12.00 per year. So do the right thing and **spay/neuter your pet today!**